

## Letters From the People

William Leith, Vandyne, Wis.—In The Commoner of September 10 in the current topics is a Lexington, Ky., dispatch to the Chicago Record-Herald concerning former Governor William S. Taylor. Was former Governor Taylor in prison or a fugitive from justice? If a fugitive from justice why was he not apprehended? When did the governor of one state obtain the right to pardon a man in another and by what authority?

(Mr. Taylor was never imprisoned but fled to Indiana where he was protected from extradition by a republican governor. He was finally pardoned by the republican governor of Kentucky.—Editor.)

James J. Hipsley, Avoca, Ia.—I enclose a clipping from the Des Moines Register and Leader. I think it deserves a place in your paper. I consider it one of the very best articles on the tariff I have seen. I have known the writer, Mr. Leach, who has always been a republican, for twenty-five years:

### Free Hides

Des Moines Register and Leader: Avoca, Ia.—To the Editor: Noticing a number of pieces written in regard to free hides, here is one. I have been in the meat business here for twenty years. Never bought but one carcass of beef of the packers in my life and that out of curiosity. Why, if free cotton will make cheaper clothing, if free lumber will build cheaper houses, if free iron will make cheaper nails, wire, etc., why not free hides make cheaper boots, shoes, harness, etc. Will not the same argument apply to one as well as the other? Who would be foolish enough to say it would not? If duty free goods of any description will make cheaper prices for an article why will not the hides proposition work all right? Here is one reason why it would not be noticed. Every tannery, every manufacturer, every boot and shoe firm and har-

ness shop is loaded up with high priced hides and leather. It will take time to work this off; also there are so many different grades of leather worked up in boots, shoes, harness, etc., and everyone nowadays wanting the best on earth, it might not be noticed as much as it really is. Another reason why free hides is all right is there are a great many more buyers of boots, shoes, harness, etc., than there are sellers of hides. I am one who will be a loser; also the packers. How is the farmer or cattle seller proposition as to loss? Why does a sheep feeder always, when he can, shear his sheep before sending them to market? Why not let the wool go with the sheep? He will tell you he can get more for his wool from a wool buyer than the packer would pay. There is no one I know of so easily skinned at present as the farmer, excepting the fellow who is trying to do the skinning. The farmer would keep his hides if he could the same as he keeps his wool. I have always bought all the cattle I needed in my business to kill. I have bought and shipped cattle. The price of hides as to the farmer never entered the deal in either case. I almost know all butchers are alike in this respect. I have bought cattle for 2 cents on foot. Beef cost 4 cents. Sold the hide for 3 cents. I have bought cattle for 4 1/2 and 5 cents and sold hides for 4 cents. In fact I have sold hides for all kinds of prices. This is called the butcher's rake off, and the farmer is not taken into consideration any more than the farmer takes you into consideration when he sells you corn and keeps the cobs and sells them for \$2.50 per load, or loads up his cattle with grass and water and wants to sell it for cattle prices. If there would be no benefits derived from free hides there would be no benefit derived from free anything. I do not blame the western senators for voting against it, because most all farmers think they

are beat out of just that much. When, in fact, they are benefited by it.

Yours respectfully,  
H. E. LEACH.

Dr. John M. Fulton, Audubon, Ia.—The republicans are publishing through their subsidized press what great things Mr. Roosevelt will do when he gets home from his lion hunt. They have been busy at this predicting for the past seven years, but with all his "trust busting" proclivities not a single trust was "busted" nor a malefactor landed in jail. He did nothing that could be construed as "progressive." He did not even appoint a progressive to office when he had the opportunity. His appointment of Taft to carry out "my policies" now puts him in the position of a physician, who, upon being called to attend a patient had other duties that compelled him to refuse the call. In such an emergency he recommended another physician whom he claimed would carry out the same kind of treatment as he would himself if he were there. But the patient finds out to his great grief that the physician sent was incompetent; that he did not try to carry out the treatment of the family physician and thereby the health of the patient was irreparably injured. Where would the patient place the blame? Mr. Roosevelt is in the place of the family physician. The patient is the public anxiously waiting for a revision of the tariff downward as was promised last fall, and other needed reforms. Well we remember the republican campaign cry last fall, "After Election." Mr. Roosevelt will not be nearly so popular when he gets home to find out that the man he recommended to carry out "my policies" has not "made good" and the blame will be laid at his door. If it had not been for the promise that was made that Taft would carry out the promises made in the Chicago platform and part of them known as "my policies," Taft would have never been elected.

W. H. T. Wakefield, Mound City, Kan.—The article by S. D. Bailey on page 3 of your issue of the 10th inst., voices the views of many democrats. This note of despondency is to be deplored, though it is not without cause. Ever a Jeffersonian democrat and always an ardent supporter of Mr. Bryan, yet for years I have had little hope of democratic success at the polls nor of any considerable benefit to the common people as a result of such success. This lack of hope is because the party has seldom, and upon the most important issue never taken an independent and logical position of its own and adhered to it long enough to attract the people. By the "most important issue" I mean the tariff question, or the question of national taxation as a whole. The democratic policy of a "tariff for revenue only" is illogical and indefensible. Considered as a method of taxation it ignores both benefits received in return for the tax and ability to pay it, making it in fact a head tax upon men, women and children, the expenditure of which inures almost solely to the already wealthy classes and of their political satraps. It is not a tax on property nor on special privilege, but upon labor and production for the benefit of property and special privilege, hence is distinctly class legislation. As a challenge to the protective idea it fails because it is but a smaller chip from the same block with a natural tendency to rapid growth. A tariff for revenue only is as protective to its extent as if avowedly for protection and no clear line can possibly be drawn between the two systems. We now produce so cheaply that a tariff sufficient to raise any considerable revenue will

furnish sufficient protection to exclude foreign goods and enable the trusts to continue their extortions. Can one imagine a congress engaged in framing a revenue tariff in which there will not be a secret, subtle, corrupting influence exerted to raise the rates to a protective basis? The plea of necessity for more revenue would always be a sufficient excuse for those congressmen whose campaigns had been secretly financed by the ones profiting by higher duties. A tariff of any kind is a restriction of natural freedom incompatible with American ideas of equal rights for all, special privileges to none, a restriction inherited from the monarchies of Europe of 150 years ago. I know that a portion of the democratic party favors an income tax, but only as supplementary to a tariff tax, hence do not propose to abandon the tariff as the chief source of national revenues. While an income and an inheritance tax are desirable to reduce overgrown fortunes, or would be if they could be made to "stay put," the trouble is that they can be largely evaded or shifted to others in higher prices as tariff taxes are. The only sound principle of taxation is the reciprocity tax, which means the payment to organized society (nation, state, etc.) of the value of the social or economic privilege received from society, such as franchises, the right to the exclusive use and possession of valuable lands, mines and water powers. All economists agree that this is the only tax which can not be evaded nor shifted—that stays put—that it takes nothing from "labor" which labor has produced, these being socially produced values, hence public property, yet are the values which now go to make millionaires. Such a system of taxation would give an economic basis of democracy, without which democracy has ever been the basis of aristocracy everywhere and the democracy that does not destroy it is certain to be destroyed by it. Our franchise values alone would easily raise all our necessary national revenue, or, if all public utilities were owned by the public and gave service at cost, only 50 to 60 per cent of the rental values of land, exclusive of improvements, would raise all our national, state and local revenues. This would abolish the taxation now paid by labor on all it eats, drinks and wears, from the cradle to the grave, and by rendering it less profitable to hold land idle and more profitable to put it to its best use would double opportunities for employment, raise wages, cheapen production and cost of living, destroy trusts and monopolies. These are the fundamental issues between de-

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